

The Key to A Successful Post-Pandemic Workplace Might Be Coaching

HR Dive | Laurel Kalser | September 30, 2022



Members of the facilities staff at Dallas Independent School District in Texas participate in a coaching session during the 2021-22 school year. Permission granted by Taylor Sandquist

Dive Brief:

Coaching is seen as a key strategy for addressing the cultural changes brought on by pandemic-prompted shifts to hybrid and flexible work, according to CoachHub's survey on global business trends for 2023.

Using coaching to reskill various levels of leadership (from first-time leaders to executives) is imperative to meet these changes, respondents said. Most (87%) already use some kind of coaching, although it's been used mainly for mid- and senior-level managers.

That may change: 9 out of 10 businesses expect their coaching budget to increase over the next 12 months, according to the more than 600 organizations worldwide that responded to the survey. Besides general leadership development, businesses see potential in using coaching to improve employee well-being and bolster women leaders and inclusive leadership.

Dive Insight:

Recent world events have turned "business as usual" on its head. Faced with demands for flexible work arrangements and increased DEI efforts (and confronted with issues raised by "quiet quitting"), business leaders must rethink priorities and processes, the survey noted.

Leaders who serve as coaches may help their organizations more effectively adjust to these transformations. By coaching direct reports, leaders can better connect with them and drive engagement, but managers aren't naturally prepared to serve in this role, a 2021 survey found.

Training managers on how to coach teaches them how to be active listeners and meet their direct reports where they are, HR Dive previously reported. By contrast, untrained managers may develop unproductive behaviors, such as micromanaging, not providing adequate feedback and focusing on weaknesses instead of strengths.

Freshly promoted front-line managers, typically lacking the skills to coach new direct reports, may especially benefit from such training, according to a June 2021 report from Forrester. In consumer-oriented businesses, while executives shape customer strategy, front-line managers are directing the employees putting the strategy into action. Effective development programs can prevent new managers from falling into bad habits. These programs should take place over a six-month to one-year period and involve formal, social and experiential learning, a research exec said.

To measure the impact of coaching, businesses have moved from an "estimate-based" approach to evidence-based metrics, according to the CoachHub survey. The top five metrics respondents found most useful in measuring success are coachee goal attainment; coachee satisfaction with their coach; coachee learning new behaviors; coachee self efficacy; and coachee engagement.

Using evidence-based metrics is effective, because unlike the estimate-based approach, such as measuring ROI, it measures tangible outcomes, CoachHub's research team told HR Dive in an email. For example, as coachees attain their goals, the results are displayed outwardly in their work behaviors and performances, the research team said.